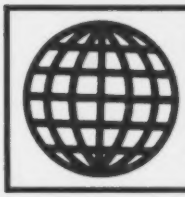

Daily Report

Latin America

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Latin America

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Paraguayan Official Denounces Human Rights Report

PY1811142588 Asuncion HOY in Spanish 18 Nov 88 p 7

[Text] Senate President Ezequiel Gonzalez Alsina, a member of the national delegation to the OAS meeting in El Salvador, has said that the Human Rights Commission report on Paraguay was "highly sectarian and even manipulative. It includes vague and erroneous facts prejudicing the image and the government of the country...."

Gonzalez Alsina took the podium at the OAS to refute some aspects of the report citing various concrete examples. "I begin by rejecting all insulting or inconsiderate assertions about the authorities of my country and I invite those responsible for the report to ponder on the propriety of the language used in it," Gonzalez Alsina said.

The report mentioned the situation of the Authentic Radical Liberal Party.

Gonzalez Alsina said the report on the political parties' situation and activities in the country was incomplete. "These abstentionist sectors violate Article 22 of the Inter-American Declaration on Human Rights and Duties which states that every citizen has the duty to vote in national elections when he is legally authorized to do so," Gonzalez Alsina said.

In his speech, the Senate president also talked about former Captain Napoleon Ortigoza, freedom of expression, and the case of children who are allegedly sons and daughters of people who disappeared during the military regime in Argentina.

EEC Grants $35 Million to Guatemala, Others

PA2411040188 Guatemala City PRENSA LIBRE in Spanish 21 Nov 88 p 3

[Summary] At the end of the 17th [as published] regular OAS session in San Salvador, it was announced that the EEC has granted $35 million for programs in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras to improve peasants' standard of living.

15th Southern Cone Transportation Meeting Opens

PY2511020288 Brasilia Domestic Service in Portuguese 2100 GMT 24 Nov 88

[Text] Cooperation and dialogue were the key words of Transportation Minister Jose Reinaldo Tavares' speech in Canela, Rio Grande do Sul, upon opening the second phase of the 15th meeting of Southern Cone Public Works and Transportation minsters.

This meeting began on Monday, 21 November, with the participation of representatives of Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Peru, and Paraguay. Its purpose is to discuss measures designed to improve the highway network that links the South American countries.

Technical meetings were held in the past 3 days. The political phase of this meeting, with the presence of southern cone public works and transportation ministers opened today.

The Brazilian governors of Rio Grande do Sul, Parana, and Santa Catarina State, and the governors of four Argentine provinces on the border with Brazil are also participating in the meeting.

Minister Jose Reinaldo Tavares noted in his speech the effort being made by the Brazilian Government to improve South American integration.

The 15th meeting of Southern Cone public Works and Transportation ministers will end tomorrow afternoon with the signing of some agreements designed to expedite land transport between South American countries.

Cuba

Talks Held at UN on Troop Withdrawal

FL2411124388 Mexico City NOTIMEX in Spanish 0315 GMT 24 Nov 88

[Text] United Nations, 20 Nov (NOTIMEX)—Delegates from Cuba, Angola, and (Marrack Goulding), United Nations assistant secretary for political affairs, today analyzed the ways in which the United Nations will supervise the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola.

A diplomatic source participating in the negotiations said that for the first time in the 40-year history of the United Nations, it is possible that observers from the Soviet Union and the United States will participate simultaneously in the verification of the withdrawal of the 50,000 Cuban soldiers from Angolan territory.

A group of observers will be responsible for verifying the fulfillment of the timetable, as well as the number of troops and the regions involved in accordance with the recent timetable which was agreed upon in Geneva. Troop mobilization to the interior of the country will be also observed.

The participation of the USSR and the United States is in compliance with African diplomatic agreements and the two nations could guarantee the fulfillment of the accords to attain peace in southwest Africa.

In the meantime, Division General Ulises Rosales del Toro, chief of the Cuban delegation at the technical negotiations on Angola and Namibia, today met with UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar with whom he exchanged views on the verification of the withdrawal of Cuban forces. We think that the United Nations should play an important role in fulfilling the tripartite agreements and we find that the secretary general favors this position, said Rosales del Toro.

The Cuban representative also said that the quadripartite technical negotiations between Angola, Cuba, South Africa, and the United States as mediator, have not yet concluded. He added that, until now, the talks had taken place without the presence of the South African delegation. However, added Rosales del Toro, the South African representatives will be present before Sunday.

Castro Receives FRG's Oskar Lafontaine

FL2311131588 Havana Tele-Rebelde Network in Spanish 1200 GMT 23 Nov 88

[Text] Commander in Chief Fidel Castro Ruz last Monday night received Oskar Lafontaine, vice minister of the German Social Democratic Party and minister president of Saar.

The meeting between the two leaders took place in a warm and friendly atmosphere. Castro and Lafontaine spoke of various topics related to the present international situation, as well as the work being done by the revolution in the areas of health, education, and other sectors.

Press Conference Held

FL2511040788 Havana Television Service in Spanish 0100 GMT 25 Nov 88

[Text] Oskar Lafontaine, minister president of Saar, held a news conference with the Cuban press a few hours before leaving our country.

Oskar Lafontaine, who is also vice minister of the German Social Democratic Party [SPD], emphasized that he was very impressed with Cuba's achievements in the fields of education and health. Lafontaine said that in the numerous talks he had here, he was able to observe the open and critical nature of Cubans.

The West German official termed his meeting with Commader in Chief Fidel Castro as a great event for him. He considers our leader a historical figure with whom he was able to converse extensively on the reality of our country.

Answering the reporters' questions, Lafontaine said that if the SPD were to win in the next elections, it would resume aid to Nicaragua. Broaching other subjects, the minister president of the Saar, emphasized that the West German Social Democrats are in favor of the consolidation of the UN agreements on Southwest Africa, and for an end to apartheid.

As for disarmament, Lafontaine said that it can only take place on an international scale, and that his party is for the cooperation with socialist countries for an end to the arms race.

In reference to ecological problems, he said he places great importance on them, because today we only have two alternatives: We either reduce environmental pollution, or we will have an ecological catastrophy in the near future.

The vice minister of the SPD came to Cuba accompanied by a group of West German intellectuals with whom he participated in the Seminar on Cultural Policies from FRG and Cuba.

Cultural Meeting Ends

FL2411161188 Havana Tele-Rebelde Network in Spanish 1200 GMT 24 Nov 88

[Report by Mayra Viera]

[Text] Culture Minister Dr Armando Hart has closed the meeting entitled "Cultural Policies From Cuba and the FRG," which met for 3 days in Havana.

One of the principal conclusions reached by the intellectuals from the two countries that had the opportunity to participate in the meeting here in Havana is the need to find cultural opportunities in the FRG that will allow us to increase ties and cooperation between the two peoples.

[Begin Hart recording] We have a cultural policy that tends to promote culture. We in the Culture Ministry have said that our officials do not have the right—we don't have the right—to impose our artistic tastes. We also don't say we direct culture. I don't like the expression: to direct culture. I prefer the expression: to promote culture. As has been said here, culture should be extensive and decentralized. We have a system of cultural institutions. We want to strengthen the system of cultural institutions so that each has its own criteria, ideas, and focus based on a scale of values. Everything should be based on a scale of values, which cannot be imposed. [end recording]

The fundamental problem of our time is guaranteeing the survival of humanity, which is constantly threatened. Fortunately, we are approaching the third millenium of a world in which reason is gathering strength even though there are dramatic realities that create concern. This is the case in the Third World.

Culture has never been unfamiliar with this situation; on the contrary, it has always been a faithful witness. The dialogue that ended today has ratified this statement and has created the opportunity to jointly search for ways to project the two cultures internationally.

Also present on the last day of the meeting was Oskar Lafontaine, minister president of Saar and vice minister of the German Social Democratic Party.

A new era was also the focus of the meeting and what a better instrument to reflect on an era than culture because culture is also an instrument of peace.

FRG Minister Ends Visit

FL2411135588 Havana Radio Progreso Network in Spanish 1200 GMT 24 Nov 88 txt

[Text] Oskar Lafontaine, minister president of the German Social Democratic Party, last night concluded his official visit to our country. The West German diplomat headed a delegation that participated here in a seminar on bilateral cultural relations.

Lafontaine was received on Monday by President Fidel Castro with whom he spoke for nearly 3 hours. The distinguished visitor also met with PCC members Carlos Rafael Rodriguez and Jorge Risquet.

Before his departure, Lafontaine said that culture is a good media for developing relations between Cuba and his country.

Vice President Comments on Gorbachev Visit

PA2411161588 Madrid EFE in Spanish 1805 GMT 23 Nov 88

[By Juan Jesus Aznarez]

[Excerpts] Havana, 23 Nov (EFE)—Vice President Carlos Rafael Rodriguez has stressed the importance of the upcoming visit to Cuba by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. He said the visit will be "an answer to the rumors spread all over the world about the relations between our two countries."

In brief remarks to EFE during last night's reception to bid farewell to Italian Ambassador Vicenzo Manno, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez attributed great importance to the CPSU general secretary's decision to visit Cuba in his first trip to Latin America.

"The meeting between leaders of such high stature as Fidel Castro and Mikhail Gorbachev is very important," the Cuban vice president said. He also expressed his conviction that Gorbachev's visit will bring positive results and dispel doubts.

The announced visit to Cuba by Gorbachev, whose reforms have attracted interest here, has sparked speculation over the true state of relations between Cuba and the Soviet Union, as their leaders chose different paths toward "building socialism." The political and economic relaxation prompted by the Soviet "perestroyka" is not matched here by the Cuban "process of correcting mistakes and negative trends." The Cuban process has returned to the use of moral incentives, and it urges rallying around traditional communist values and opposing liberalism.

"We have always been accused of being a Soviet satellite. Now, we are told we should do as the Soviets are doing," Fidel Castro told several Brazilian newsmen recently. [passage omitted]

An official source acknowledged to EFE that there will be "complex and even difficult negotiations" during Gorbachev's visit to Cuba. He noted, however, that "There are no problems clouding bilateral relations."

Foreign Trade Minister Ricardo Cabrisas currently is in the Soviet Union. He is discussing trade issues and a cooperation plan for 1989 with his Soviet counterpart, Konstantin Katushev. [passage omitted]

Cabrisas Analyzing Trade

FL2311124688 Havana Radio Progreso Network in Spanish 1200 GMT 23 Nov 88

[Text] Cuba and the USSR have analyzed in detail mutual trade for the current year, including Cuba's delivery of sugar, nickel, and citrus.

The situation was examined in Moscow by Ricardo Cabrisas, Cuban foreign trade minister, and Konstantin Katushev, Soviet foreign economic relations minister. The analysis also included Soviet deliveries of fuel, food, lumber, and an extensive range of raw material, machinery, and equipment.

The two parties said that although the work in this area has progressed, there are still matters that need to be resolved.

PLO Official Grateful for Aid Provided

FL2311131388 Havana Television Service in Spanish 0100 GMT 23 Nov 88

[Text] The determination of the Palestinian people in continuing the struggle for their independence was reiterated today by the PLO ambassador to Cuba, Imad Jadaa, during a press conference he granted in Havana.

The diplomat made a [word indistinct] on the results of the meeting recently held by Palestinian National Council in which the formation of a [word indistinct] for that nation was declared, and which has already been recognized by 45 countries.

He also expressed the importance of holding an international peace conference for the Middle East with the goal of defending the rights of the Palestinian people. The PLO ambassador to Cuba thanked various countries from all over the world for their cooperation. In particular, he thanked the Cuban people who donated 500 tons of sugar to be distributed in the Israeli-occupied Arab territories which are today blocked by the Zionists.

Castro Bids Farewell to Chissano at Airport

FL2311130088 Havana Tele-Rebelde Network in Spanish 1200 GMT 23 Nov 88

[Text] Fidel Castro Ruz, first secretary of the PCC, bid farewell to Joaquim Chissano, president of the People's Republic of Mozambique and the Frelimo [Mozambique Liberation Front], at the Jose Marti International Airport.

The Mozambican leader has concluded his private visit to our country. During his visit, Chissano underwent surgery and the results are said to be satisfactory.

Chissano arrived in Maputo on Tuesday afternoon and was received by the principal leaders of that country in the southern cone of Africa.

Spanish Minister on Officials Expulsion

FL2311133188 Havana Radio Progreso Network in Spanish 1200 GMT 23 Nov 88

[Text] Spanish Foreign Minister Francisco Fernandez-Ordonez has affirmed in the Senate that the group of right-wing parliamentarians that recently traveled to Cuba knew that they would not be allowed into our country. The minister said that Senators Loyola del Palacio and Javier Camara from the Popular Alliance Party were officially told that their entry into Cuba would not be authorized.

Cuban authorities, as they opportunely reported, demonstrated that those senators led a group that was attempting to promote illegal activities for propagandistic purposes in our country.

The Spanish foreign minister said that his government presented a note of protest because it considered Cuba's prohibition to be unjustified. Nevertheless, in reviewing the events, the Spanish minister said that every state has the right to prohibit any foreign citizen it considers to be undesirable from entering its territory. In this sense, he reiterated that the group was warned their entry would not be authorized and they would not [as heard] be returned on the first flight back if they made the trip, which is what happened.

U.S. Troops Presence in Bolivia Examined

PA2411042088 Havana International Service in Spanish 0000 GMT 23 Nov 88

["Our America" commentary read by Manolo Ortega]

[Text] The unauthorized presence of U.S. soldiers in Bolivia is about to unleash a parliamentary storm, while there is growing uneasiness over the possible entry of a new U.S. military contingent into that South American country.

Last week, the Bolivian Government requested that the Congress authorize U.S. troops to perform construction work in Bolivia. The request has led to an intense and ongoing controversy. Congress President Julio Garret Ayllon explained that the U.S. soldiers intended, among other things, to construct a new landing strip at the Potosi Airport. This explanation, instead of convincing the Congress members, was strongly rejected. Many of them remembered that over the past few weeks, two U.S. military missions carried out several tasks in Bolivia. The tasks were described as civic actions. Even while discussions were in full swing at the Congress, it was learned that 100 U.S. troops were already in Bolivian territory and that further military contingents were expected.

Several political parties immediately voiced their opposition. The Bolivian Labor Federation issued a strong protest over the possible U.S. military arrival, saying it would represent an attack on Bolivian sovereignty. Antonio Aranibar, presidential candidate for the United Left, a left-wing coalition, wrote an open protest letter to the authorities, the Armed Forces, and the Bolivian people, saying that the introduction of a new U.S. military contingent was aimed at turning Bolivia into a base from which Washington could control the southern cone.

Although Jorge Rodriguez Bravo, Bolivian Armed Forces commander in chief, has stated that the United Left's accusations are false, he has not provided conclusive evidence to the contrary. In fact, the evidence is against him. Since 1985, three U.S. contingents of Yankee soldiers and officials have arrived in Bolivia, and their presence was rejected by the entire population with public demonstrations and other measures.

What has been most disturbing about this situation and has served as the basis of the United Left's protest, is that there are already over 100 U.S. troops in Bolivia that arrived without Congress' authorization. Several legislators recently said the possible expansion of the Potosi Airport is only a smokescreen to justify the U.S. military presence, adding that Bolivia has technicians and tens of thousands of unemployed who are capable of doing the job.

Since the arrival of the first U.S. soldiers, there has been concern that Bolivia will become the Honduras of South America. For this reason, the controversy in Congress may spread.

Crop Damage Assessed in Pinar del Rio Province

FL2311142788 Havana Tele-Rebelde Network in Spanish 1200 GMT 23 Nov 88

[Text] The Pinar del Rio provincial delegation of the Agriculture Ministry has listed the measures to be taken to reduce to a minimum the losses in tobacco, coffee, tuber, and vegetable crops as a result of Hurricane Keith.

According to reports, 11 caballerias of tobacco were lost and 71 caballerias were partially affected. Also, one-third of the existing 332,000 tobacco plots were seriously damaged. Partial damage has been noted in 250 caballerias of tubers and vegetables. However, total losses will not be great.

As of Sunday, 220,000 cans of coffee have been picked. The coffee beans are maturing quickly because of the heavy rainfall. This has caused the number of cans that must be picked in only a few days to increase to 114,000 in addition to the 15,000 cans that are already on the ground which will cause the mobilization of 9,000 workers to double the actual harvest.

Sanitation rules for the vegetable crop have been issued to avoid disease.

Caricom

Compton on Political Union at OECS Summit

FL2411191288 Bridgetown CANA in English 1710 GMT 24 Nov 88

[Text] Castries, St Lucia, Nov 24, CANA—The 14th heads of government meeting of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) opened Thursday with a call from St Lucia's Prime Minister John Compton for immediate action on plans to set up a political union of the seven territories.

"The longer we hesitate, the more difficult our task becomes as the determination of some of our members appear to flag and other constitutional arrangements appear more attractive," Compton said.

In a statement in which he reiterated the importance of a political union to the Eastern Caribbean, Prime Minister Compton referred to events in the Maldives where a group of mercenaries attempted, "with near success" to take over the country. "This once again demonstrates the fragility and vulnerability of small states and indicates the steps which we should take if our countries are not to be the next target for mercenary adventure," he said.

Compton also mentioned the election result in Canada and said that the single issue which dominated the campaign, the Canada-United States free trade agreement scheduled to take effect on January 1, "should be an encouragement to those who dare to advance the cause of OECS unity."

Compton said that as was done in Europe, the leaders should fix a terminal date for their discussions and let all the other consequential arrangements fall into place. "As we have done with the freedom of movement of goods, we must set a date for freedom of movement of people among our countries and let our officials work out the details," he added.

He said that the logical next step in the process of trade liberalisation must be the unification of the customs services, and the security of the region would be strengthened by the unificaiton of the officer corps of the police forces.

"Our judicial services, which are already unified, will be replenished more readily if there is a pool of legal officers to whom we offer a regional career and from which we can draw from time to time," he added.

Prime Minister Compton stressed that these decisions did not need and, therefore, should not await, new constitutional arrangements. He also called for public fears regarding freedom of travel to be dispelled by steps being taken not only to reduce legal and bureaucratic restrictions but by bringing the cost of travel within reach of the average person in the region.

"Travel should not be mainly for business but as important for social contact. Any progress in this regard will depend upon the restructuring of our regional airline Liat," he added.

Compton said that with 1992 nearing, the uncertainty which continues to cloud the future marketing of principal export crops of sugar and bananas, makes it imperative for the islands to have an effective presence in Brussels. He was referring to plans by the European Community to have an across-the-board free trade arrangement in operation in 1992.

Antigua and Barbuda

New Australian High Commissioner Visits

FL2411231588 Bridgetown CANA in English 2055 GMT 24 Nov 88

[Text] St. John's, Antigua, Nov. 24, CANA—Australia's new High Commissioner to Antigua and Barbuda, Ian Willey, this week presented his credentials to Antigua and Barbuda's acting prime minister Lester Bird, during a short visit.

"Antigua and Barbuda is a small place in terms of size and population but certainly very much on Australia's map because of the wealth of cricketing talent you keep producing," Willey said at a press conference.

Bird, who is also minister of foreign affairs, said there have been on-going bi-lateral talks between both countries. "We have been discussing ways and means of allowing our people to have access to your universities to enable us to achieve some measure of transfer of knowledge and technology from your country to ours," Bird explained. He continued, "It is very important for us to establish dialogue and to really see how best we can advance in the kind of programmes that will help these small countries to maintain some degree of independence economically."

Bahamas

Creation of Paramilitary Service Denounced

FL2311164088 Bridgetown CANA in English 1729 GMT 22 Nov 88

[Excerpt] Nassau, Bahamas, Nov. 22, CANA—The Grand Bahama Human Rights Association has denounced government proposals for creation of a paramilitary national service scheme here, criticising the proposals as unconstitutional, and aimed at creating a military organisation that would run counter to a free democratic society.

The association, in a statement issued here Tuesday, promised to marshal opposition to the proposals and to convene public discussion in order to gauge public opinion.

The bill to set up the service is slated to be introduced into the Bahamian Parliament shortly, where fierce debate is expected.

On the provisions of the bill, the association said: "(They) are repugnant to certain fundamental principles of our Constitution, the universal declaration of human rights and international labour conventions."

"...Those who promoted and drafted its provisions are determined to create a military organisation inimical to the tenets of a free and democratic society...," the association added. "It is the intention of the association to marshal support, both nationally and internationally for opposition to the legislation," it added. [passage omitted]

Barbados

Negotiations on U.S. Tax Concessions Planned

FL2411193088 Bridgetown CANA in English 1510 GMT 24 Nov 88

[Text] Bridgetown, Barbados, Nov 24, CANA—Barbados is planning tough negotiations with the United States in a bid to get it to continue tax concessions for U.S. offshore insurance businesses here, Central Bank Governor Dr Kurleigh King, has said.

The U.S. Congress recently voted to end the excise tax exemptions for insurance companies when the double taxation treaty betweens the two countries expired at the end of 1989.

"The Government of Barbados has been in touch with its representatives in Washington and we have begun discussions on the issue," The NATION newspaper quoted Dr King as saying.

"We believe that it was not the proper thing for the United States to do and we are going to negotiate very strongly with them to rectify that situation."

Dr King said that local jobs would not be severely affected, but removal of the tax concession could lead to Barbados losing a sizeable amount of foreign exchange earnings from the offshore insurance companies withdrawing their business.

The paper said it is estimated that the offshore sector contributes at least 20 million dollars (one Bds dollar—50 US cents) annually to Barbados economy. The money, paid in the form of foreign exchange, is derived from taxes, licences, the use of legal accounting and auditing services, as well as telex, fax, and telephone facilities, office accommodation, equipment, and transportation.

Haiti

CATH Notes Avril's Reaction to 21 Nov Strike

FL2311183488 Port-au-Prince Radio Nationale in Creole 1400 GMT 22 Nov 88

[Excerpts] The Autonomous Organization of Haitian Workers, CATH, with headquarters on Rue des Casernes, last week called for a general strike on Monday, 21 November—yesterday—to force the government to satisfy certain demands. The main effect of this strike, the first that the government has had to face, was to cause controversy among concerned sectors—to the point where observers who for one reason or another did not go out into the streets, found it impossible to get a real idea as to what the result of yesterday's strike was.

The CATH, which launched the strike, estimates it was observed by more than 85 percent. [passage omitted]

But for the CATH, the true success of the strike stems from the fact that the general spoke of the strike. We will read for you:

CATH says: One of the most surprising results of the strike was the statement by Prosper Avril at RTNH, where with his copy of the Constitution, he explained why this strike was illegal—whereas he himself had set the same Constitution aside in order to serve his own political interests.

In this connection, CATH invites Avril to draw his conclusions as to the test [preceding word in English] that he had expressed the wish for—during the RTNH interview—in order that he might also test his popularity. This democratic strike has once again shown that the president is (?basically outside the picture) and he should publically acknowledge his defeat and accept the consequences of that defeat.

However, that is not what came from the government, which at the end of the day also issued a communique, through the Ministry of Information and Coordination. Noting that activities were carried out normally despite this call for a general strike, the Haitian Government interpreted the attitude of the sectors not affected by the strike as evidence of their political maturity and their sense of civic responsibility, which they showed on this occasion.

In the Information Ministry communique, the military government specifically thanked the working class which, despite certain difficulties encountered in finding transportation to their jobs early in the day, did not allow themselves to be manipulated by those calling the general strike but had, instead, understood that at the current difficult economic juncture in Haiti, work is the only path to salvation for Haiti. [passage omitted]

That was a communique from the Ministry of Information and Coordination, in which the government said it was very pleased with how normal activities were yesterday in the capital and in provincial towns.

[Passage omitted] Still in connection with this strike, Mr Jean Claude Lebrun, the secretary general of the other CATH—the one affiliated with the Latin American Central Organization of Workers [CATH-CLAT]—stated his position on the CATH's call for a general strike. They feel this is an isolated act by CATH, under pressure from certain people's organizations and certain political organizations that have nothing whatsoever to do with labor or union matters. Jean Claude Lebrun said there were many union organizations in Haiti, and many valid reasons concerning the workers for a union federation to call for a general strike. There was no need to call on other, political organizations, because union matters are union matters and political matters are political matters, said Lebrun. Here is an excerpt of his statement to one of our reporters.

[Begin Lebrun recording] The CATH-CLAT's position on this strike is that the first mistake made in launching it was that while all we union federations were sitting down together at the Social Affairs Ministry discussing the problem of insecurity with the Ofatma [Office for Matters Related to Work Accidents, Illness, and Maternity] and ONA [National Old-Age Insurance Office]—as we four or five union federations were sitting there broaching all these problems that the working class has, the problem of the international seminar that the BIT [International Labor Bureau] is holding, and so forth—we hear that the CATH executive secretary has gone on Radio Soleil and announced that he is going to launch a general strike.

Thereupon, we sent a (?message) telling him that we had heard what he had said over Radio Soleil and asking him to sit down with us to see if there really is a need for a strike and to decide on what grounds a general strike is to be called.

Next we hear that the CATH has gone out and called for a general strike. And who also called for this strike? People's organizations!

There are four union federations and a National Confederation of Haitian Instructors. First of all, there are plenty of union federations; and second, there are plenty of working class demands for us not to have to base a general strike on political demands. If we need to hold a general strike, there are plenty of points on which to mobilize the population. [passage omitted]

I don't see why we should argue our position basedmon a number of demands having to do with politics, and political leaders. [passage omitted]

(?In a) society, each institution should concern itself with its own sphere of activity, in the battle to establish democracy in a country! We are unions. We should struggle normally, in connection with union matters. Each sector should struggle in its own sphere of activity. And our contribution will (?help make way) for a better establishment of democracy in the society. That is why CATH-CLAT is not a little pawn on a (?checkerboard) that certain political sectors are using to realize their own personal ambitions, as they have (?done) in the past. [end recording] [passage omitted]

Aristide Issues 'Critical' Statement on Avril

FL2311002288 Port-au-Prince Radio Metropole in French 1145 GMT 23 Nov 88

[Excerpts] Father Jean Bertrand Aristide made a rather critical, and sarcastic statement yesterday regarding the current government. Father Aristide feels that the Prosper Avril government is not (?responding to) the Haitian people's demands. Father Aristide expressed his opinion in the oratory style with which you are familiar.

[Begin Aristide recording, in Creole] [Passage omitted] Bravo to all of you who just held a general, legal, strike—despite the statements from an illegal general. Bravo for your courage. You courageously rose up and spoke. I heard. [passage omitted] I saw that you rose up, both here and abroad, so that I could stand beside you here, rather than abroad.

You, too, who have plotted against me and against the Haitian people—Msgr Paolo Romeo, Msgr Gayot, Msgr Ligonde, Msgr Kebreau, and so forth—give me a chance to look you in the eye. Please, don't be uncomfortable. Look me in the eye. I have come to tell you that I love you.

How fortunate that the Haitian Church is rich, thanks to the poor, in a country that is poor because of the rich!

The church is rich thanks to you poor people, who prevent the bishops from hiding amidst the sins they are committing when they lie so that they can plot and remain silent. Alone, you are weak. Together you are strong. All together, you constitute an avalanche.

When the avalanche of the poor comes sweeping down, (?arm in arm) with the peasant poor, the military poor, the unemployed poor, the military poor, [repetition as heard] the worker poor, the military poor, [repetition as heard] the [word indistinct] poor, the military poor, the church of the poor [words indistinct]—when this avalanche comes sweeping down, God will be bringing down the bigshots in order to raise up the little guy. Consult Luke, Chapter One, Verse 52. General Avril, you said that Haiti was debased. So? So, nothing!

You said you would turn over Fort Dimanche. You changed the name of the Criminal Investigations Department. So? So, nothing!

The Haitian people are hungry, living in abject poverty, and being shot at. Wait.

The workers are in a bind. The school system is wretched. The university is a mess. Wait.

The peasants have serious problems. The section chiefs are running amok. Wait some more! Why are you in such a hurry?

St. Jean Bosco burns down. Franck Romain is in people's faces. Mr Avril supports him. Wait.

Little bosses are the flunkies of big bosses, and these big bosses are the flunkies of the Americans. Oh, come on, now! Wait!

Slavery in the Army. Slavery in the Dominican Republic. Oh, oh! Wait some more?

There is a coup d'etat. There is another coup d'etat. A general departs. A general is back in power. So? So, nothing! Endless waiting.

The tribunal of the people is right in finding the government guilty and incompetent. You are guilty because you are allowing the savage macoutes to gallop around with no cord of justice around their necks. You are guilty because you refuse to take Franck Romain and the criminals who effected the massacres into custody. You are guilty because you have betrayed the 17 September movement soldiers, fired patriotic members of the Armed Forces, and protected members of the Armed Forces whose only fatherland is their pockets. You are guilty because you are sending the Haitian people out to die in fatal future elections [eleksyon SIDA-CEDAH—a play on words involving AIDS and the proposed Electoral College of Haiti] just to satisfy the Americans, before there is a cleanup. You are guilty because you are playing the same game Francois Duvalier played.

You are incompetent because the grades the government deserves are: as far as justice is concerned, zero; security, zero; cleanup, one.

General Avril, catch the macoutes, arrest Franck Romain, effect the cleanup, and put an end to insecurity. The matter is in your hands. And the Haitian people's grading pencil is in its hands and God's blessing is on it, so that grace will continue to pour down until the avalanche sweeps away all Duvalierists, all macoutes, and all criminals, for as long as time shall exist, amen. [end recording]

Salinas Discusses Foreign Debt With Bush

PA2411041188 Hamburg DPA in Spanish 1647 GMT 23 Nov 88

[Text] Mexico City, 23 Nov—On his return from Houston, Texas, where he talked yesterday with his U.S. counterpart, George Bush, President-elect Carlos Salinas de Gortari announced immediate measures for reducing service on the Mexican foreign debt, which stands at over $105 billion.

"I told Bush we cannot wait 2 months until his inauguration to begin the foreign debt negotiations that will stop the transfer of capital and begin the recovery," Salinas de Gortari told local newsmen.

"Bush has already appointed persons to the financial posts, and next week I will announce to the public the general strategy of my administration: The new negotiations will begin immediately," he added.

The two met in Houston yesterday for 4 hours to discuss the main bilateral problems, including the foreign debt, narcotics trafficking, and illegal immigrants. Salinas de Gortari will take office on 1 December and Bush on 20 January.

In statements to the local media, the Mexican president-elect said that he had reiterated to Bush Mexico's refusal to participate in the U.S.-Canada common market.

Concerning the thousands of illegal farm hands [braceros] that cross the border looking for work, "I told him I would rather have those fellow countrymen working in Mexico, but the United States also needs them in some areas of its economy," Carlos Salinas de Gortari concluded.

Common Market Not Welcome

PA2311195688 Paris AFP in Spanish 1430 GMT 22 Nov 88

[Text] Matamoros, Mexico, 22 Nov (AFP)—Mexican Commerce and Industrial Development Minister Hector Hernandez warned last night in this city that Mexico is not ready to take part in a North American common market with the United States and Canada. He said Mexico will instead continue to pursue its policy of reaching agreements on individual trade issues.

The minister noted that, under the current administration, agreements were reached "in which we have a more or less competitive position with regard to the United States," such as in the steel, textile, or automobile industries. He said "This in no way means integration," because there is still the need to guarantee the survival of the weaker industrial areas.

For the minister, the agreements reached with the United States "do not mean that we agree with the idea of a North American common market, which would mean opening up completely to both exports and imports."

Regarding the outcome of yesterday's Canadian elections, Hernandez said Canada "is living through the conflict that arises from the integration of economies that do not have the same level of development."

PAN Accepts Salinas' Dialogue Proposal

PA2411153788 Mexico City Red Nacional 13 Imevision Television 1955 GMT 23 Nov 88

[Text] The National Action Party, PAN, has accepted the proposal for a dialogue made by President-elect Carlos Salinas de Gortari to all the opposition parties. This announcement was made at noon today by PAN President Luis H. Alvarez, who believes that this dialogue is necessary to establish absolute congruence between words and facts, meaning political speeches and the government's policy.

The PAN president said his party believes a dialogue or an agreement are not substitutes for the opposition's struggle, but a way of improving the country's welfare.

Cardenas on Municipal Elections, Other Issues

PA2411144388 Mexico City UNOMASUNO in Spanish 19 Nov 88 pp 1, 7

[Second and concluding part of a report on an interview with Cuauhtemoc Cardenas, former presidential candidate of the National Democratic Front, by Teresa Losada, during municipal election tour in Tlaxcala State; date not given]

[Excerpts] "I do not think the Critical Current [PRI faction], the Group of 23 [not further identifiedS] or who knows how many factions, have a chance of modernizing the PRI. That possibility was closed when we decided to keep our beliefs and leave the party, " Cuauhtemoc Cardenas noted during a long talk with UNOMASUNO during a campaign tour of Tlaxcala State. [passage omitted]

On the way to La Malinche, he said "Those who are totally estranged from the people and are insensitive to their demands refer to paternalism in a pejorative manner to deny solidarity with the people," Cardenas remarked. For him, "The state must play a role as guardian of groups that have been dispossessed and exploited for years," but he warns that as a result of the state's economic programs "it will not be able to solve the problems of the majority." It will be the people "who will solve their problems with or without us." [passage omitted]

"If we cannot win the office of mayor and govern a municipality, we will not be able to govern the country," he noted. [passage omitted] "With the governments economic and political programs, it will be impossible to solve the problems of the majority. This is not a personal struggle, the people will organize to solve their problems and take to go over this government's policy, with or without us," Cardenas said.

[Losada] How do you feel about the democratic intentions of Salinas de Gortari?

[Cardenas] I do not believe in the possibility of democratizing the union machines. The modernization that the members of the progressive center are proposing will clash with the union machines. They will not be able to modernize the official party. Take away the PRI's subsidy and nothing will remain.

[Losada] Why was it that when you and others created the Democratic Current, democratizing the system was feasible?

[Cardenas] The last chance was the Democratic Current, which we set up. All the internal opportunities were closed to it. At present we have to struggle for internal democracy. We did that with loyalty to our party. When that possibility was closed, we decided to keep our beliefs and leave the PRI.

[Losada] What is your opinion of the new Critical Trend headed by Gonzalez Guevara?

[Cardenas] I wish him success, which is all I can wish him, although I do not believe he will be successful. I do not believe that the Critical Trend can do anything against the PRI's influence over so many segments or that it can prevent the president from designating governors and senators. I do not believe the Group of 23—or God knows how many—will be able to democratize the party, because the first thing that would have to be determined is whether the PRI is a party or a government agency.

[Losada] Will the PRD [Party of the Democratic Revolution] struggle for a change in the political system?

[Cardenas] We will struggle for a regime in which change will be legal and possible. It is very important to guarantee the possibility of change. What we cannot support or repeat is this state party regime. Our struggle is basically aimed against this regime, which is in its final stages, even though it is making very strong last-ditch efforts.

[Losada] Why has fraud become a trait or essential mechanism of government and politics?

[Cardenas] Because the interests defended by the perpetrators of fraud force them to use any resource at hand. Those interests are usually illegitimate; they are based on corruption and the country's surrender to foreign interests. Fraud is perpetrated when contracts for projects are assigned, commissions are selected to make purchases, municipal authorities are handpicked, and elections are manipulated. All of this is fraud, and it is this political culture that has created the system.

[Losada] It is possible to develop a new political culture?

[Cardenas] Yes, by working with the rank and file and with the people, showing a different type of behavior, and promoting values that should be promoted, not those used in this system, which is in its final days. On 6 July that form of politics and way of countering majority interests were rejected in favor of a willingness to rediscover and broaden the right path. The people are determined, and they are taking action. The sole reason for the masses' presence in the current political struggle in Mexico is to support large-scale social changes. [passage omitted]

Cuba's Castro To Attend Salinas Inaugural

PA2411133388 Mexico City Red Nacional 13 Imevision Television in Spanish 1318 GMT 24 Nov 88

[Text] Cuban President Fidel Castro this morning confirmed that he will attend Mexican President-elect Carlos Salinas de Gortari's inauguration.

Japan Grants Loan for Telephone System

PA2411035888 Mexico City EXCELSIOR in Spanish 17 Nov 88 p 10-A

[Summary] Japan has granted a $300-million loan to Mexico for the installation of digital telephone exchanges. The agreement was signed by Finance and Public Credit Secretary Gustavo Petricioli; Mexican Telephone Company Director Joaquin Munoz Izquierdo; and Kioshi Uemura, executive director of the Japan Export and Import Bank. The loan will be for 15 years, with a 3-year grace period and an annual interest rate of 5.5 percent.

* FDN Challenge Within Michoacan SNTE

32480027 Mexico City PROCESO in Spanish No 621 26 Sep 88 pp 11-13

[Article by Homero Campa]

[Text] For the 16th anniversary of his coming to power among teachers, Carlos Jonguitud Barrios decided to give an example of his political influence now that he is in his newly acquired Senate seat. And he seemed about to achieve this: the celebration was attended by President Miguel de la Madrid, and the banquet organized by the Revolutionary Vanguard was attended by President-elect Carlos Salinas de Gortari.

But, while matters are not easy inside PRI, neither are they in the previously well controlled National Trade Union of Education Workers [SNTE]. And, although it did not rain in Queretaro, location of La Corregidora Stadium where the festivities took place, the celebration was spoiled for Senator Jonguitud Barrios.

The teachers gathered at the stadium went out of control, and turned the festive event into an act of protest: they hissed and booed President De la Madrid, and interrupted his speech with shouts of "raise, raise," and "Cuauhtemoc, Cuauhtemoc."

The critical situation within SNTE goes beyond an incidental protest. Corruption has begun to break out among the friends and protegees of the current secretary general, Antonio Jaimes Aguilar, whose cacique holding in Michoacan seems to be disintegrating with the increase in the group of teachers wishing to leave SNTE so as to form a state group, abandon PRI, and join the National Democratic Front [FDN].

The tip of the corruption appeared the week before last, when the director of public education coordinated services in Michoacan, Ignacio Ramos Espinoza, dismissed the human resources director, Clara Olascoaga, and the head of the Telesecondary [televised secondary education] Department, Arturo Torres, for improperly being assigned to and collecting a salary in teachers' positions.

Both became officials at the proposal of SNTE, and with the direct backing and recommendation of Jaimes Aguilar.

Olascoaga collected the pay for 28 positions, 8 for herself and 20 for advisers, agents, and leaders of the Local 18 state executive committee, including the secretary general, Jaime David Gonzalez Aguilar, himself.

For these and other reasons, the teachers shouted "raise, raise," at the La Corregidora Stadium, when President Miguel de la Madrid (a special guest at the celebration of Vanguard's 16th anniversary) declared: "In spite of the economic shortages that have beset us as a nation, the progress in educational and cultural policy has been significant."

Grave, and visibly annoyed, the chief executive stopped his speech for a few seconds in view of the hissing and booing from many of the 50,000 persons attending the event. He went on to say: "The policy of the government of the revolution over which I preside has given priority to the educational sector because we believe that we must continue to expand and preserve the quality of our education, and to develop and disseminate our culture."

Concerned, Jonguitud Barrios issued orders to control his followers. It proved impossible. The shouting continued and was on the verge of escalating. The great throng turned against him, although SNTE has had experience with this type of event: During the presidential campaign of PRI candidate Carlos Salinas de Gortari, it organized 34 massive events, 4 of a size comparable to that on Thursday, 22 September.

In fact, the shouts began when the official SNTE leader, Antonio Jaimes Aguilar, stated in his remarks that, "the country is indebted to teachers, for their perseverance, efforts, and sacrifices exhibited in the task of education must be met with recognition from the people and the government, to be translated into better salaries and sufficient fringe benefits, making it possible for the teacher to lead a decent life."

The teachers brought from Michoacan, Morelos, Jalisco, and the State of Mexico began shouting "raise, raise," also starting to chant "Cuauhtemoc, Cuahtemoc," when Jaimes Aguilar reproached "those who turn the right to dissent into pressure based on disruptive licentiousness, in order to destroy the unity, social peace, and rule of law that we Mexicans have won."

In the afternoon, the festivities continued at a banquet attended by President-elect Carlos Salinas de Gortari who (having been warned as to what had occurred at La Corregidora Stadium) claimed to have the intention of improving salaries and fringe benefits for the next 6 years; he added that better quality in education would be impossible so long as the teachers' living standards were not raised.

Arturo Torres had collected the pay for 51 positions in the Telesecondary Department, which were distributed among the members of the State Executive Committee, and also among some education officials in the state, and relatives, photographers, and SNTE agents.

The dismissal caused a conflict between SNTE and the Public Education Secretariat [SEP]. In Mexico City, Jaimes Aguilar and Jonguitud Barrios succeeded in ousting Ramos Espinoza as head of the coordinated education services in the state, leaving a trusted person in his stead: On Monday, 19 September, the position was filled by Jorge Enrique Hernandez Preciado, a compadre of Jonguitud Barrios, former Jalisco teachers' union leader, social security and social welfare secretary of the SNTE National Executive Committee [CEN] (1974-1977), and ex-delegate of SEP in the state of Hidalgo.

But the matter did not end there. It was discovered that the local secretary general and Jaimes' strong man in Michoacan, Jaime David Gonzalez Aguilar, has a 42-hour-a-week position in the federal secondary schools, a position in a primary school, and 36-hour-a-week telesecondary school position in addition to the salary that he earns as union agent, in a primary school inspector's slot. He earns nearly 2.5 million pesos a month, a salary never dreamed of by a teacher.

On Monday , 19 September, the newspaper LA VOZ DE MICHOACAN reported the telesecondary personnel roster for the first half of August, from payroll office 6023100AIZ186. Appearing on it as "aviators" [those who are on a payroll even though they do not work at their jobs and their salaries may be collected by a superior or other individual] were Mario Loya Hernan Lopez, chief of technical secondary schools in the state; Jose Luis Arias Garcia, private secretary to the primary school director; Maria Guadalupe Gonzalez Aguilar, sister of the local leader, Jaime David; her driver, Mario Iniestra Pichardo; and 46 others who, thanks to SNTE and with the approval of SEP, jointly earned 22.8 million pesos per month.

Teachers Rebelling

The corruption in the union local and the public education coordinated services, 80 percent of whose employees are friends or compadres of Jaimes, prompted the intensification of a Michoacan teachers' movement: the Cardenist movement.

These are teachers who participated in Cuauhtemoc Cardenas' campaign. Last February, they held a breakfast and a function when the National Democratic Front's candidate for the presidency traveled through Michoacan. The visible head of this movement is Jorge Fausto Barriga, secretary general of the state executive committee from 1980 to 1983 and, for a time, an associate of Jaimes Aguilar himself.

In early November, the Cardenist teachers are planning a gathering to begin the work for the trade union reorganization of Michoacan teachers. Fausto Barriga claims to have the majority of the state's 55,000 teachers and, together with about 100 instructors, is working with the rank-and-file teachers in the union delegations, some of which sent letters repudiating their state leaders.

The battle will be waged at the local congress next January, when the state leadership is replaced. Fausto Barriga will be launched as a candidate for the secretary general's office. He will propose Local 18's withdrawal from SNTE, to form a state union.

A cacique in alien territory, Jaimes Aguilar was not born in Michoacan but rather in the Colonia Cuauhtemoc, in the municipality of Tlalchapa, Guerrero, on 13 June 1942. He attended the rural normal schools in Misantla and Perote, Veracuz, where he was organization secretary for the Federation of Socialist Students and Peasants of Mexico, when Lucio Cabanas was secretary general. Fellow countrymen and friends, both kept in touch until the end of the 1960's, when Lucio was already involved in the guerrillas.

In 1965, Jaimes began giving instruction as a rural teacher in the settlement of San Lucas, in the Michoacan municipality of Ciudad Hidalgo, starting his union activities in the zone 22 delegation. He is still remembered there as a humble teacher, without money, who was sometimes aided by the peasants themselves for his support.

When Jonguitud took control of SNTE in 1972, Jaimes joined the Local 18 secretariat of labor and disputes. Three years later (with Jonguitud's approval), he occupied the secretary general's office. Always at the disposalof the "moral leader," Jaimes won his sympathy-.Jonguitud made him his compadre, and it was through his auspices that he became a federal deputy representing Michoacan's second district in 1976.

A 'Little Cacique' in Action

Upon leaving the position of local leader in 1977, he imposed his cacique holding, leaving his supporters in the local's secretary general's office: During that year, the position was held by Jose Luis Lemus Solis (current director of coordinated education services in Campeche); in 1980, it was Jorge Fausto Barriga, now opposed to him and heading the Cardenist teachers; in 1983, it was Ascension Bustos Velasco (ex-deputy, and secretary of retirees and pensioners on SNTE's CEN, with influence among the Michoacan rank and file who, during that year, was accused by Jaimes of fraud in a union store, a maneuver to eliminate his influence); then, Jorge David Gonzalez Aguilar (current local leader and Jaimes' strong man in Michoacan); and Carlos Acosta (Jaimes' "mouthpiece" for attaining the state leadership next January, and thereby continuing his cacique holding).

In 1977, Jonguitud brought him to SNTE's CEN. He held the posts of secretary of social action (1977-1980), pensions and retirement (1980-1983), and credit (1983-1986). "Because he is institutional and loyal to Revolutionary Vanguard," as his biography reads, at the SNTE National Congress held in La Paz, Baja California, Jonguitud named him to be secretary general for the 1986-1989 term, faced with disapproval from a considerable number of delegates. Also, under the lifetime leader's protection and handling, he obtained the Senate seat representing Guerrero, a state with which he is not familar and in which he is unknown. His case was the one most challenged by FDN in the Senate. Three hours elapsed before they approved his decision. Despite the evidence and the charges, the PRI majority made him a senator in the Electoral College.

In 1977, Jaimes promoted the founding of the 22 September Normal School in Morelia. His friend and protegee, Magdaleno Ruan Villegas, took over the administration. Without a building, with secondary and primary school teachers assigned as a teaching staff, and with financing through the students' cooperation, the normal school operated for 3 years based on the pledge that it would have official validity, a school building would be constructed, and its graduates would obtain positions. A trust was created to collect funds. The honorary presidents were Jaimes Aguilar and Lemus Solis, who was local secretary at the time.

In 1980, the normal school's 2,000 students realized that there was no official validity in the courses, that code 1634901 for incorporation into SEP had been forged, that no procedures had ever been carried out by the public education authorities, and that there were no funds to erect the building. Between May and June, a strike was held at the normal school, and for 3 days the students occupied the State House. Governor Carlos Torres Manzo ordered an audit. Fraud on the order of

2.663 million pesos was discovered—a considerable sum in that year (before the 1982 debacle).

State Treasury Audit No. 128 found promissory notes from Lemus Solis, whereby he had diverted funds from normal channels to build union offices and the Teachers Hotel, buildings which had already been constructed. The school's director, Ruan Villegas, was sued for fraud in the State Attorney General's Office. Nothing happened. And now he is seen in the SNTE CEN's secretary general's office, as an aide to Jaimes Aguilar.

Jaimes Aguilar is no longer a humble rural teacher. The Michoacan teachers cannot understand how his salary as union agent with a position as a secondary school director can suffice to enable him to own and maintain four houses in Morelia, one in the Federal District, a farm in Tlalchapa, Guerrero, and five late model cars. He also owns a hall for children's parties. At his behest, SNTE purchased a white 10-seat executive plane with blue stripes and registration XBDZR, which he used for his campaign as a candidate for senator, and which he keeps in a private hangar at the Mexico City airport.

Belize

Guatemalan Gunboat Fires at UK Naval Vessel

FL2411230088 Bridgetown CANA in English
2127 GMT 24 Nov 88

[Text] Belmopan, Belize, Nov 24, CANA—Belize's state radio on Thursday reported that a Guatemalan gunboat fired at a British naval vessel that has been conducting a survey in Belize's waters. The radio said the incident occurred last Sunday in the waters off southern Belize.

The report said that the HMS Fawn, which has been conducting holographic surveys, was reportedly in Belizean territorial waters—near the median line where the sea boundaries of Honduras, Belize and Guatemala meet—when "a Guatemalan gunboat ordered the ship to stop." The instruction was ignored, the radio said, "whereupon the Guatemalan vessel fired a shot in the direction of the British survey vessel."

The British dispatched two Royal Airforce fighter planes to the "general area and once the British Harriers appeared at the site of the incident, the British communicated by telephone with Guatemalan authorities," the radio reported. Agreement was reached for the Guatemalan vessel to withdraw from the area.

British authorities have taken up the matter with Guatemala and trust that Guatemalan authorities will take measures to ensure "that an unfortunate and dangerous incident" which occurred on Sunday "will not recur," the radio said.

In early October the Guatemalan naval patrol in the same general area in the south of Belize, seized a Honduras registered boat along with its Honduran crew and five Belizeans including five fishermen and a marine biologist who were conducting deep sea fishing research in the area. The Belizeans were later released after the Belize Government approached Guatemalan authorities. Belize Prime Minister Manual Esquivel later told a press conference that the Honduran vessel was in Guatemalan waters when it was seized.

Relations between Belize and Guatemala have been strained by their territorial dispute. Guatemala claims a section of Belize—a claim which the former British colony rejected.

Costa Rica

Security Minister Denies Attack on Nicaragua

PA2311132988 San Jose Radio Reloj in Spanish
1242 GMT 23 Nov 88

[Text] The Security Ministry has denied Nicaraguan press reports on an alleged attack on the Gavilan del Castillo border post by contras entering Nicaragua from Costa Rican territory during the past weekend.

Security Minister Hernan Garron promptly contacted Major Jorge Rojas, head of the command post in Los Chiles, who denied the reports. Maj Rojas said, however, that his staff is investigating similar reports of incidents that allegedly occurred on 26 October.

According to reports from the Los Chiles command post, the border has been absolutely calm during the past few months, as no contra groups have been seen in the area.

Maj Rojas said local residents have reported that they occasionally hear shots on the Nicaraguan side of the border.

The area allegedly attacked by contras entering Nicaragua from Costa Rica is 5 km from Las Tiricias.

El Salvador

Armed Forces 'Redoubling' Security Measures

PA2411035588 San Salvador Canal Seis Television
0200 GMT 22 Nov 88

[Report by Marlene (last name indistinct)—passages within quotation marks recorded]

[Text] Defense and Public Security Minister General Carlos Eugenio Vides Casanova has repeated that security measures will be intensified throughout the nation in response to the rebels' warning that they are going to increase their activities against the Army and step up their economic sabotage.

The FMLN command announced on Radio Venceremos that the truce called for the duration of the OAS assembly has ended and therefore the FMLN will attack the country's infrastructure. The defense minister said the announcement was an attempt by the rebels to make a show of strength, but the Armed Forces will demonstrate the rebels' weakness. "They will probably stage attacks. We are redoubling our security measures in both the capital and the interior. You may rest assured we will reduce to a minimum any guerrilla actions, at either strategic or military installations."

On the presidential elections to be held in March 1989, the officer said the Armed Forces would provide all necessary support and they ask that politicians allow them to carry out their activities in a disinterested manner.

"We have asked all political parties to let us carry out our constitutional mission, that each party campaign within the electoral process, and that they let the people provide them with the share of power they are entitled to."

In conclusion, Vides Casanova said it was appropppriate that the 18 countries at the OAS assembly had condemned terrorism, as unjustified violence should be condemned, whoever is responsible.

Vides Casanova also announced that the Armed Forces will investigate the archbishop's charges about the death of three peasants in Morazan.

"Every time something like this happens, we order the commanders to conduct an investigation immediately. We are also asking for the cooperation of the various humanitarian organizations, such as the Human Rights Commission, in conducting investigations.

You can rest assured that whenever the Armed Forces are involved in human rights violations, we will conduct the investigations to establish the truth."

FMLN Attacks, Transportation Stoppage Announced

PA2411184588 San Salvador Canal Doce Television in Spanish 0300 GMT 24 Nov 88

[Excerpts] A soldier from the Salvadoran Armed Forces' Engineers Training Center was shot to death today. Another soldier was taken to the Military Hospital with serious injuries to his face. The incident happened at approximately 1500 on Centro America Street, near the Colon Park in San Salvador. The two soldiers were guarding a mass transit bus on Route No 11.

According to reports by witnesses, the bus was filled with passengers. Suddenly, a man and a woman fired at the soldiers, who were apparently distracted by something. It is believed the perpetrators are FMLN urban guerrillas. [passage omitted]

Moreover, FMLN urban guerrillas have warned owners of private cars not to drive during the next transportation stoppages. Individuals claiming to belong to the Pedro Pablo Castillo Front warned in a telephone call that the FMLN General Command has ordered them to attack any vehicle that disobeys the rebels' stoppages. They noted the measure includes sabotage against any type of vehicle, even if they are not military vehicles or mass transit buses. The rebels said they will begin taking these actions starting with the next transportation stoppage, but they did not say when it will be.

Continuing with FMLN actions, one soldier was killed and two were injured during an FMLN attack in Villa Dolores, Cabanas Department. According to a report, the attack took place at 0100 and lasted 1 hour. The soldiers who guard the town repelled the rebels. In addition, two Belloso Battalion soldiers were injured during an FMLN ambush. The soldiers were patrolling San Jorge Jurisdiction, San Miguel Department. In conclusion, four peasants, including a child, were maimed when a mine exploded near Suchitoto.

Colon Buildings Damaged

PA2311132588 San Salvador Radio Cadena YSU in Spanish 1200 GMT 22 Nov 88

[Text] Early this morning guerrillas attacked Colon, a town 19 km west of San Salvador in La Libertad Department. The rebels destroyed the mayor's office, the Civil Defense installations, the telecommunications office, and a gasoline station, military sources have confirmed. The FMLN began the 30-minute attack at about 0100. There were no casualties on either side.

Propaganda Bombs Explode

PA2411041388 San Salvador Canal Doce Television in Spanish 0330 GMT 24 Nov 88

[Text] Three FMLN propaganda bombs exploded in various parts of San Salvador tonight. The explosions injured one person and damaged buildings.

The victim, Orlando Guillen, was walking in front of the Hula Hula Park tonight when he stepped on a bomb, which injured his leg.

[Begin Guillen recording] I inadvertently stepped on the device because I did not see it. [words indistinct] [end recording]

One of the bombs was planted on Arce Street and Third Avenue in front of the Hula Hula Park, another in front of the Hispanoamerica bookstore, and a third at the west side of the National Palace. It has also been reported that urban commandos tonight dynamited several power lines along the Army Boulevard.

[Begin unidentified person recording] It is clear the persons who planted these bombs intended to terrorize the people with complete disregard for whom they might hurt. [end recording]

Police sources say they have detained a man, about 25-years-old, who apparently helped plant the devices. People also reported seeing a larger number of policemen patrolling the capital's main streets.

20-22 Nov Actions

PA2411044888 [Editorial Report] (Clandestine) Radio Venceremos in Spanish to El Salvador carries an approximately 25-minute long war bulletin comprising reports from various FMLN units on their recent activities throughout El Salvador.

In a report from Metapan, Santa Ana Department, the FMLN claims that on 21 November it carried out a "successful" operation named "In the face of the dictatorship's repression, everyone join the fight," which began at 0030 and ended at 0115. According to the report, the FMLN attacked a police roadblock located near a Texaco service station, and the Civil Defense headquarters in the northeastern part of the city. The guerrillas claim they destroyed the pumps at the gas station, blew up some electricity poles, killed three of the "enemy," inflicted an as-yet-undetermined number of casualties, and left the city of Metapan and its environs without power.

A report from the "Modesto Ramirez Central Front" states that at 0120 on 22 November, the guerrillas seized the town of Villa Lourdes, in Colon municipality, La Libertad Department, "just 20 minutes from the capital, just 20 minutes from the garrisons of the Treasury Police, National Guard, 1st Infantry Brigade, and the artillery unit at Opico." The report says that in the operation, named "No to the puppet government's elections," the guerrillas attacked the Civil Defense headquarters, released four prisoners, destroyed the facilities, and seized 4 G-3 recoilless rifles, 25 G-3 ammunition clips, 6 carbines, 6 carbine cartridge belts, a 9-caliber pistol with 50 bullets, a PRT-77 military communications radio, 4 field hospitals, and other military equipment.

A report from the "Anastasio Aquino Paracentral Front" claims that a bomb placed by the FMLN at La Pedrera on the Zacatecoluca Highway on 20 November was picked up by the Armed Forces and taken to the military base, where it exploded at 0900, causing five casualties.

A final report from the "Feliciano Ama Western Front" states that on 20 November the FMLN set a booby trap on the Pan-American Highway near San Vicente, which exploded when cavalry units attempted to remove it. Two soldiers were killed and three others injured.

Honduras

FAO Official Released; Motive Still Unknown

PA2311123988 Paris AFP in Spanish 0632 GMT 23 Nov 88

[Text] Tegucigalpa, 22 Nov (AFP)—The police have reported here that FAO official Carlos Zelaya, who was kidnapped in Tegucigalpa tonight, was released a few hours later by his captors.

According to the official report, Zelaya was released in the Cerro de Hule area, some 30 km south of the capital.

"Zelaya is safe and sound," the police said, but gave no details as to the motive of the kidnapping.

As the FAO official was leaving a shopping mall in Tegucigalpa, gunmen forced him into their car, which then sped off for an unknown destination.

Officials Oppose Tax Agreement With U.S.

PA2311173788 Tegucigalpa Cadena Audio Video in Spanish 1200 GMT 23 Nov 88

[Report by Lorena Beljes]

[Text] Finance Ministry sources have reported that a team of legal advisers from the ministry recommends that the government not sign a proposed tax information agreement with the United States. The advisers came to this conclusion after studying the agreement.

According to the advisers, one of the legal problems with the agreement is that it would mean modifying the current income tax law to allow access to individual bank accounts. The Finance Ministry sources wondered how fair it would be to make this change solely to provide this information to the U.S. Government.

The advisers also said the United States intends to use the reciprocal tax information agreement to track the laundering of drug-trafficking profits.

The sources added that, because the tax information agreement will allow only income taxes to be monitored, it is absurd to believe that the agreement will control the money Hondurans deposit in U.S. banks—it does not have such scope.

Honduran officials recently revealed their willingness to sign the agreement, whereas the private sector considered it an attack on bank secrecy and privacy.

The U.S. Government has said Honduras must sign this agreement to benefit from several million dollars in U.S. investments, especially from companies in Puerto Rico. The National Assembly, however, will have the last word on the signing of the agreement.

Nicaragua

Assembly's Nunez: Municipal Elections Postponed

PA2411234388 Hamburg DPA in Spanish 2158 GMT 24 Nov 88

[Text] Managua, 24 Nov (DPA)—The serious economic crisis in Nicaragua caused by Hurricane Joan in October has forced the Central American country to postpone municipal elections, scheduled for early next year, until November 1990. Carlos Nunez Tellez, president of the Nicaraguan Assembly, explained the measure in an interview with the German press agency DPA, affirming "we do not lack the political will, but rather the resources, the infrastructure, and so forth."

As a result of this the presidential, parliamentary, and municipal elections will be held at the same time, Nunez announced. He is one of the most influential members of the ruling Sandinist Party of Nicaragua. The Constitution establishes the election of a new president on 4 November 1990 and "we do not have the political will to change the Constitution and not hold" these elections, he explained.

Nunez was confident that "if we were to hold elections of any kind now, the Sandinist Front would win." He based his statement on the fact that "the political forces of the opposition are divided and do not have a program or political platform to present to the Nicaraguan people."

Tinoco on OAS Assembly, Possible Summit
PA2411044188 Managua BARRICADA in Spanish 22 Nov 88 p 5

[Text] Nicaraguan Vice Foreign Minister Victor Hugo Tinoco said yesterday that Nicaragua wants the Central American summit to be held soon and has therefore agreed on a broad agenda for discussion in Mexico in late November, when the area's foreign ministers will attend the inauguration of the new Mexican president.

Tinoco noted that the agenda includes discussions on the holding of a summit, the role of the Esquipulas II verification commissions, the deployment of an international force on the Honduran border, and other matters.

Tinoco held a news conference yesterday in which he summed up his work at the OAS General Assembly meeting held recently in San Salvador. He declined to say what venue Nicaragua would propose for the site of the summit but said that "we will reach agreement."

When asked about Honduras' refusal to attend the summit while the suit filed by Nicaragua at the court at The Hague is still pending, Tinoco said the matter was discussed separately and that Nicaragua is analyzing Costa Rican Foreign Minister Rodrigo Madrigal Nieto's proposals. He said that his country has argued that "there will be no reason for the suit" when the reason for the accusation (the contras' presence in Honduran territory) ceases to exist, but that Nicaragua would reserve the right to return to the court of justice.

He emphasized, however, that the Honduran foreign minister's position was not yet clear and, on the issue of deploying an international force, added that this was not clear either. He noted, though, that "they [not further identified] seem to be more prepared now."

The OAS assembly was informed of the case of the expulsion of our ambassador to the OAS and to the United States during the discussion of a report presented by the OAS Legal Committee that proposed action on the OAS host country agreement; in other words, to work on a new agreement between the OAS and its host country.

Tinoco said: "The Tunnermann incident made OAS ambassadors realize that any OAS representative can be the object of the same arbitrary measure he experienced, because under any pretext—without any proof—the United States can expel any OAS ambassador."

Tinoco added that everyone should think about a new agreement with the host country; the current agreement deals with diplomatic immunity and privileges only. The U.S. representative to the San Salvador OAS assembly left the room when a draft bill concerning a new host country agreement was proposed. Latin America, however, approved it.

Tinoco stressed: "That demonstrates that the OAS is not only a Latin American forum, but a forum for a dialogue between the United States and Latin America."

The agreement discussed by the OAS seeks to find ways to face arbitrary measures in the future. Tunnermann, however, continues as our ambassador to the OAS and Washington, Tinoco reiterated.

There is a question mark over the future of Latin American relations with the United States. What will happen with the Bush administration?

In that regard, Tinoco said there is a common denominator concerning Central America. Central America needs political negotiation. There were no heated debates about Central America at the OAS assembly, but Tinoco admitted this could be because of the impasse caused by the change in the U.S. Administration.

Not even Shultz' speech was aggressive. Tinoco, however, said the important thing is not that Bush will change the entire Reagan cabinet, but the 8 years between "the time when President Reagan reached the height of neoconservatism with a Central American policy based on shooting, and today's reality, which demonstrates the failure of that policy. Today we have a different reality and there is a new U.S. President, although no one can make confident predictions."

Tinoco admitted that any U.S. Government will try to exert political pressure on Central America, but he noted the importance of negotiation. We must avoid repeating what happened with Reagan, who rejected almost everything, including the Contadora and Support Groups; "those groups are Latin American political milestones that were built in spite of Reagan."

When discussing the continent's economic crisis and the foreign debt issue at the OAS assembly, the representatives mentioned the progress made in seeking more unified positions.

It was stated clearly that the problem between Latin America and the United States is economic and not ideological, as Brazil has demonstrated. On this question Tinoco repeated that Latin America, through SELA and the Group of the Eight, is trying to create an instrument of unity to defend its interests.

Cuadra on Bush, U.S. Relations, Military Draft
PA2311172488 Managua Radio Sandino in Spanish 1200 GMT 23 Nov 88

[Text] Vice Defense Minister Joaquin Cuadra has said that U.S. President-elect George Bush must be realistic and realize that Nicaraguan patriots are willing to hold a dialogue, but from a position of mutual respect. The EPS major general noted that the Nicaraguan Government has repeatedly stated its willingness to reach an understanding with the United States. Such an understanding, he noted,

would enable Nicaragua to reach an agreement with the Central American governments that receive their instructions from imperialism. He added that a dialogue with the United States will not be held at any cost. A respectful dialogue between both countries is required, Cuadra stressed, as the Nicaraguan Government will never accept orders from the U.S. Government.

Maj Gen Cuadra added that Bush will inherit a dead Central American policy, although it must not be forgotten that Bush was a key supporter of the policy to destroy the Nicaraguan revolution. The vice defense minister said the efforts to defend the fatherland must be intensified now that there is much talk about peace and a possibility of a new U.S. Central American policy following the defeat of Reagan's policy.

Cuadra made these statements during a military promotion ceremony in the 6th Region. He announced the complete success of the Patriotic Military Service, SMP, registration and update process that covered more than 50,000 youths born in 1971. He added that the Nicaraguan youths had once again proven their willingness to serve the revolution, as the number of youths who had registered with the SMP was more than 100 percent over the projected figure. This, he said, is clear evidence to the world that we have raised an unshakeable youth that will not be swayed by the right-wing counterrevolutionary groups.

Recent Actions by Honduras Protested

PA2411212988 Managua Radio Sandino in Spanish 1949 GMT 24 Nov 88

[Text] According to a Foreign Ministry note released in Managua, the Nicaraguan Government has issued a strong protest to the Honduran Government condemning further acts of harassment by the Honduran Army.

The note, signed by Foreign Affairs Minister Miguel D'Escoto, recounted actions of the past several days by Honduran soldiers, who fired .81-caliber mortars and heavy machineguns at an EPS observation post. The note also reported an incursion of three Piranha boats, which opened fire with machineguns on a border post 16 km southwest of Potosi. The note added that the boats returned to their bases in neighboring territory when the EPS returned fire.

D'Escoto said this represents Tegucigalpa's total rejection of Managua's proposal for an out-of-court settlement of Nicaragua's case against Honduras at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague.

Sandinist authorities have charged the Honduran Government before the ICJ of allowing Honduran territory to be used by counterrevolutionary groups in their war of aggression. Managua has proposed withdrawing the case if both parties achieve a bilateral agreement enforced by an international force.

D'Escoto's note also said these new attacks are part of a continuing and systematic campaign of harassment. Such conduct leads to more charges before the ICJ. Furthermore, the note said it is clear that Honduras' desire for peace, which it reaffirmed at the 18th OAS meeting in El Salvador, is not being demonstrated by a proper attitude of commitment and understanding.

Central Bank Announces New Exchange Rate

PA2411140488 Managua Radio Sandino in Spanish 1245 GMT 24 Nov 88

[Text] The Nicaraguan Central Bank has issued a communique announcing a new change in the official foreign exchange rate. The new exchange rate goes up from 550 cordobas to 920 cordobas per dollar. The Central Bank communique says the new official cordoba-dollar exchange rate will become effective as of today.

Meanwhile, authorized foreign exchange sellers announced that the U.S. dollar will be bought for 2,220 cordobas and sold for 2,310 cordobas.

The new foreign exchange rate will force price increases in a number of imported products that are very important for the country's social and economic development.

'Galloping Inflation' Reaching Alarming Levels

PA2411124088 Managua LA PRENSA in Spanish 21 Nov 88 pp 1, 12

[Text] "Absurd" prices have now reached immigration services and electricity, resulting in another "Black Monday" due to the high inflation that is worrying Nicaraguans.

High inflation is also felt in the food stores, with the increase in the prices of staples such as rice, sugar, beans, vegetables, and fruits during the past weekend. This, coupled with the recent increase in the price of beef, makes it more difficult for Nicaraguans to obtain their accustomed array of food.

In addition to new prices on soft drinks, liquor, cigarettes, and matches, today the price of milk went up and immigration services have also greatly increased.

A liter of milk went for 200 cordobas today, while passports now cost the astronomical sum of 50,000 cordobas, with the departure tax increased to 20,000 cordobas.

Also, Nicaraguans will have to pay more for electricity. Consumers who up to October paid 2.68 cordobas per kilowatt will have to pay 6 cordobas in November, which brings minimum consumption up to 150 cordobas.

Here is a list of other immigration services that will cost more: 3-month multiple visa, 90,000 cordobas; 6-month visa, 150,000; extension of visitors' deadline, 30,000; identification and travel document, 10,000; passport

renewal, 10,000; certifications, 5,000; declaration of missing passport, 10,000; residence card, 15,000; renewal of temporary residence card, 10,000; renewal of permanent residence card, 5,000; and home address certification and nationalization document, 5,000 cordobas.

In addition, the price of dairy products is expected to rise in the next few days because, according to local producers, the increase to 200 cordobas per liter does not cover production costs; it is therefore necessary to increase the price of butter and cheese.

Meanwhile, together with the price increases, the Finance Ministry has announced that the so-called "ceiling" for income tax payments will be 795,000 cordobas.

The galloping inflation has surprised and alarmed Nicaraguans. Some observers believe it is out of control, while others feel the price increases are designed to gather up the large amounts of cash to be paid as Christmas bonuses, which are expected to circulate in December.

MINT, EPS Forces Battle Contras in La Palma

PA2311210888 Managua BARRICADA in Spanish 22 Nov 88 p 5

[Article by T. Rothschun]

[Text] Juigalpa—Combined forces of the MINT [Interior Ministry] and the EPS killed one contra and injured several others on 20 November in a clash in El Pital, in the La Palma area. This area is 3 km from the "Pikin Guerrero" rice enterprise.

A MINT source said the dead contra was known by the alias Javier. He said Javier belonged to the group led by "Picacha," from the Jorge Salazar Regional Command.

The EPS did not sustain any casualties. Local residents said the mercenary group fled, carrying several wounded contras. The source did not give more details about this matter.

The blow against the terrorists is part of the strategy carried out by the MINT-EPS special forces. The plan seeks to track down, fight, and annihilate the small contra groups, usually comprising 5 to 10 rebels, that are attacking economic targets and civilians.

Panama

Relations With USSR Reportedly Planned

PA2311142188 Hamburg DPA in Spanish 0252 GMT 23 Nov 88

[Text] Panama City, 22 Nov (DPA)—Guillermo Cochez, vice president of the Christian Democratic Party, has reported at the Legislative Assembly that Panamanian Ambassador in Tokyo Alberto Calvo has been taking steps over the past 4 months to enable Panama to establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.

Although he did not confirm Cochez' report, Panamanian Foreign Minister Jorge Eduardo Ritter said today that Panama will establish relations with two socialist countries. He declined, however, to specify which countries he meant.

PDC Statement on Dialogue, 'Peaceful Struggle'

PA2311153688 Hamburg DPA in Spanish 2322 GMT 21 Nov 88

[Text] Panama City, 21 Nov (DPA)—The opposition Christian Democratic Party [PDC], Panama's second largest political force, held its ninth regular congress to elect national leaders and a political committee.

The congress was attended by Luis Herrera Campins, former Venezuelan president and secretary general of the Christian Democratic International, and diplomatic representatives from the United States, Italy, Spain, the FRG, Great Britain, and France. Ricardo Arias Calderon was reelected PDC president.

At the conclusion of the congress, Arias Calderon read a declaration entitled "Hope and a Better Life," which states that "the dictatorship continues to systematically violate human rights, the administration of justice is perverted, the Panamanian state is under military control, and the official role of the Armed Forces is distorted."

The declaration adds that the dictatorship "favors the growth of communist influence to the detriment of friendship with democracies, endangers the future of the canal, is destroying the economy, and is wiping out public finances, dramatically aggravating our people's living conditions."

Speaking about democratization, it says "this can only occur peacefully if the soldiers stop controlling the political process, begin to respect the Constitution, and devote themselves to their professional duties."

According to the declaration, the PDC is always willing to hold a national dialogue as long as "the dialogue is held between the Civic Crusade and the opposition parties on the one side and the Armed Forces on the other side, as well as with the participation of the apostolic nuncio in Panama."

"In a democracy, elections are the way to freely choose leaders and thereby reaffirm the value of the democratic system of government," says the declaration, referring to the 7 May 1989 elections. It adds that "in a dictatorship, elections only make sense as a way to struggle for the democratization of the government system."

In conclusion, the declaration states that "if the dictatorship tolerates basic freedoms, this can be one way to carry out a peaceful struggle and even achieve reconciliation. Otherwise there will be a confrontation with unforeseeable consequences."

Opposition Parties Sign Unity Document

PA2411230388 Panama City LA ESTRELLA DE PANAMA in Spanish 24 Nov 88 p 1

[Document signed by opposition political parties in Panama City on 22 November 1988]

[Text] The political parties and independent men and women who have signed this document are certain that an immediate return to peace and calm, justice and liberty, is necessary. These conditions are essential for reconstructing the economy and restoring fiscal order, for ending the hunger and unemployment of the Panamanian people, for building democratic institutions, and for overcoming the moral and material crisis that burdens us. Therefore, we have solemnly agreed to work together to establish a national unity transition government based on broad participation, a government that could count on the support of the majority of the people.

Our objective is national reconstruction and reconciliation, which would permit fair, free, and honest elections in a climate of liberty, respect, and peace, and with the financial support that elections require.

To accomplish this lofty objective General Manuel A. Noriega must leave the Panama Defense Forces [FDP] immediately. The majority of Panamanians want this. We believe national unity will not come about through persecution, hatred, and vengeance, but through true reconciliation of all sectors. Our position on the FDP is that its institutional integrity will be respected. An FDP dedicated to its professional functions under legitimate civilian authorities should contribute to national reconstruction and reconciliation. The new leadership in the institution is to make necessary military changes in and out of the country.

We hereby state our firm faith in a dignified, prosperous, and sovereign future for Panama. With the participation of all honest Panamanians of goodwill, we will rescue the nation from its present ruin to build a nation of justice, liberty, democracy, decency, order, and well-being for all Panamanians.

Panama City, 22 November 1988
Authentic Panamenista Party
Carlos Rodriguez and Jorge P. Adames
Christian Democratic Party
Ricardo Arias Calderon
Republican Party
Eric Arturo Delvalle
Liberal Party
Roderick Esquivel
Nationalist Liberal Republican Movement
Alfredo Ramirez
Authentic Liberal Party
Arnulfo Escalona

U.S. Envoy Accused of Continuing 'Provocations'

PA2311145088 Panama City LA ESTRELLA DE PANAMA in Spanish 23 Nov 88 pp A-1, B-6

[Report by staff writer James Aparicio]

[Excerpts] Panamanian Foreign Minister Jorge Ritter told LA ESTRELLA DE PANAMA yesterday that U.S. Ambassador Arthur Davis "has continued to test" the government's tolerance and patience.

"Panama has shown tolerance and patience over Davis' presence here. Yet he has continued his provocations and continues to make a mockery of everything contained in the agreements that his country and ours have signed," Ritter said in commenting on statements by the U.S. diplomat regarding eventual political changes in Panama. [passage omitted]

"I do not know if he has a crystal ball that has told him things are going to change," Ritter said. He added that perhaps Davis "is saying things are going to change because he has reconsidered his own position and has felt contrite and repentant." [passage omitted]

'Desperate' Efforts Cited

PA2411181788 Panama City CRITICA in Spanish 24 Nov 88 pp 1, 14

[Report by Toti Urriola]

[Text] In the hallways of the U.S. Embassy this week, people have noticed much restlessness and, particularly, the desperate efforts Cultural Attache [as published] Terrence Novey Kneebone is making. This is because, according to our sources, "the embassy's clock" has begun to chime, announcing changes in high-ranking embassy positions.

The sources say the aforementioned gringo is "taking precautions." In his final desperate efforts, Kneebone has started to attack the Panamanian people again. This week he started sending invitations to meetings for studying the Panamanian situation. This is a clear intervention in Panamanian domestic affairs. Terrence Kneebone is sending invitations to important Democratic Revolutionary Party figures using as a pretext a discussion of the party's political position.

The desperate efforts seen around the embassy also include those of shady John Maisto, a figure sadly remembered in the Philippines. He is now increasing his attacks on and intimidation of Panamanian Government officials and local politicians. Meanwhile, although Ambassador Arthur Davis is in the throes of his death rattle—because he is being transferred to Washington—he has started a domestic political campaign by meeting with local opposition politicians to reiterate the well-known promises that the opposition can reach power through a struggle in the streets. His recent public appearance at a meeting of the Authentic Panamenist Party and members of the Christian Democratic Party at the Marriott Hotel confirmed that he is conducting the aforementioned activity.

Argentina

Chilean Consul Statement Rejected in Mendoza

PY2211214888 Buenos Aires Domestic Service in Spanish 1600 GMT 22 Nov 88

[Text] Mendoza Provincial Government Minister Juan Carlos Fajardo considers the statement by Chilean Consul to Mendoza Oscar Fuentes Lazo very serious, untimely, and absolutely reckless. The Chilean Consul said that in Mendoza there is a subversive group supporting Chilean guerrillas that are plotting against President Pinochet's regime.

These remarks by the Chilean consul are related to the arrest in Mendoza of Chilean citizens on charges of arms possession and robbery.

This morning the Mendoza provincial government minister stated that the consul's remarks are very serious, because if he is in a position to prove what he said he should take the matter to court, especially considering the current state of the investigations.

Fajardo said that if the consul has the proof to back up his statement, he should take the matter to court. He added that we must wait for a resolution by the federal court, which is the appropriate organ to deal with this matter as provided by the Constitution. So far the information we have is based on newspaper reports, not anything formal.

The government minister added that his government will never accept these types of denunciations made by the Chilean consul, who should give more information on the matter.

Moreover, Nestor Vicente, presidential candidate for the Broad Front for Liberation [FRAL], has reported that the Chilean opposition militants who have been detained in Mendoza were tortured by police.

He added that the provincial government is responsible for these incidents that remind us of a military dictatorial regime, because the police are subordinate to the government.

The FRAL leader added that he will ask the Argentine Foreign Ministry to expel the Chilean consul to Mendoza because he is obviously an informer for the Chilean intelligence service.

It has also been learned that Judge Roberto Jorge Burad, who is hearing the case, has decided to bring nine of the detainees to trial, and to release eight of them.

Foreign Ministry Communique

PY2411014388 Buenos Aires TELAM in Spanish 2344 GMT 23 Nov 88

[Text] Buenos Aires, 23 Nov (TELAM)—The Argentine Foreign Ministry has said the government will not accept any form of prejudiced and unfounded charges regarding internal Argentine issue. The declaration refers to Chilean Consul to Mendoza Oscar Fuentes, who said that the province supports subversion in Chile.

Ambassador Alberto Ferrari Etcheverry, Latin American Affairs under secretary, has called Chilean Ambassador to Argentina Sergio Gaete Rojas to express the Argentine Government's disgust at the consul's declarations.

The Foreign Ministry communique reads as follows:

1. It is well known that national and provincial authorities have worked hard to prevent and repress any attempt to use Argentine territory for such criminal activities.

2. Therefore, neither Mendoza nor any other place in the Republic is used to support any terrorist activity of any ideological affiliation.

3. The Argentine Government will not accept any form of prejudiced and unfounded charges regarding internal Argentine matters, the communique concluded.

Chile

Foreign Minister Views OAS, U.S. Meetings

PY2411014888 Santiago Domestic Service in Spanish 2200 GMT 23 Nov 88

[Text] Upon returning to Chile from El Salvador and the United States, Chilean Foreign Minister Hernan Felipe Errazuriz stated that all the country's objectives were achieved in his trip. We also contributed in projecting an adequate image of our country's situation at a time very important for Chile, the foreign minister stated at the international airport.

[Begin Errazuriz recording] All the objectives we proposed have been achieved. These objectives, of course, have been approved by the OAS General Assembly, and I believe our interests have been safeguarded through our participation in the conference, and through our contacts with U.S. officials and other foreign ministers. I think we have contributed in projecting an adequate image of our country's situation at a time very important for Chile. [end recording]

The foreign minister left on 12 November for El Salvador to participate in the 18th OAS General Assembly. He then went to the United States, where he bid farewell to officials after serving for 4 years as Chilean ambassador prior to his designation as foreign minister.

Errazuriz added that after briefing the president of the Republic, he will hold a news conference on his activities abroad.

Government Recognizes Argentine Effort in Incident
PY2511020588 Santiago Radio Chilena Network in Spanish 2200 GMT 24 Nov 88

[Excerpt] Foreign Ministry spokesman Carlos Ducci today said that the government recognizes the work being done by Argentine officials to clarify the incident involving the arrest of alleged Chilean terrorists in Mendoza.

Ducci made this statement in answer to a declaration released by the Argentine Foreign Ministry that said that Argentina does not support subversion and will not accept any form of prejudice regarding internal issues.

[Begin Ducci recording] First of all, I would like to point out that our consul general in Mendoza talked exclusively about facts related to details of police actions that everyone knows about.

The consul general also expressed his full recognition for the cooperation being given by officials [words indistinct] in this police case. Regarding the declaration released by the Argentine Foreign Ministry yesterday, we regret that the Argentine Government did not contact our Foreign Ministry through regular diplomatic channels. The declaration says that the consul's remarks are prejudiced and interventionist. We do not believe they are [words indistinct] because he recognized the cooperation and work being done by Argentine officials to clarify this case. It seems odd that a situation involving a network of distribution of subversive weapons exclusively for Chile would be labeled interventionist. This is also an issue that affects us. [end recording]

In addition to the request to Chilean Ambassador Sergio Gaete, the Argentine Federal Judge of Mendoza, (Roberto Murar), will ask Chilean Consul Oscar Fuentes Lazo to appear for questioning. The judge said that the invitation to appear will be made next week and that the consul can either go personally or answer in written form. [passage omitted]

National, Liberal Parties Merge, Form New Party
PY2411003088 Santiago Radio Chilena Network in Spanish 2200 GMT 23 Nov 88

[Excerpt] The National Party faction headed by German Riesco and the Liberal Party faction headed by Hugo Cepeda have agreed to create the Centrist National Liberal Alliance [Alianza del Centro Nacional Liberal—ACNL].

The new party hopes to reach an agreement with the democratic sectors to face the upcoming elections united. This statement was made to Radio Chilena by Tomas Puig Casanova, vice president of the new alliance and former vice president of the National Party faction headed by German Riesco. Riesco is now the president of the new alliance.

Puig also said that the new alliance will start a plan to get supporters and to register the party. [passage omitted]

Colombia

Defense Minister Addresses Nation on Bomb Attack
PA2311183488 Bogota Inravision Television Cadena 1 in Spanish 1733 GMT 23 Nov 88

["Message to the nation" by Defense Minister General Manuel Jaime Guerrero Paz on 23 November; place not given—recorded]

[Text] I am willing—I tell you here and in front of the entire country—to surrender my life if my blood helps make Colombians realize what is happening in our country; if my sacrifice can awaken solidarity for a government freely elected by the Colombian people; and if this final contribution I can make helps the Legislative and Executive branches and all of the country's segments understand the seriousness of the situation we are experiencing and the need to work together with the government to solve our problems.

The solution to our problems is not merely a military solution, but an overall solution that demands the participation of all of the country's segments, as I have repeatedly told the media. That solution requires the participation of all political, economic, social, and military organizations.

We cannot simply seek a unilateral solution. We need an overall solution to our problems. We need all Colombians to truly understand the true dimension of our situation. We must all condemn the violent rebel movements, which want to reach power through mad actions such as this one and which threaten the lives of those Colombians who head the institutions that by all means want to protect the life, property, and honor of all Colombians.

To those who are on that side of the street, to the rebel groups, I tell them that the effort to end my life was completely useless. If I am the victim of another attack like yesterday's, I assure you there are generals, officers of all ranks, noncommissioned officers, and soldiers who will take the same path I am taking. I can assure you the space I will leave is not merely an institutional vacuum. If I die, if they succeed in eliminating me in the immediate future, a man of greater stature, courage, and firmness will take my place to guide the military in fulfilling its duty.

I tell you I am not afraid. I am not afraid at all. I will defend the country's democratic institutions at all cost.

I tell my men, my subordinates in the Army, Navy, Air Force, and National Police, that I am here calmly coordinating all military actions to get rid of that threat.

Responsibility Claimed

PA2511044488 (Clandestine) Radio Patria Libre in Spanish to Colombia 0030 GMT 25 Nov 88

[Text] The (?FARC) general staff [word indistinct] responsibility for the urban ambush on Defense Minister General Manuel Jaime Guerrero Paz. The ambush on the current defense minister is the third direct attack against Virgilio Barco's Defense Ministry. On 23 October 1986, former Defense Minister General Rafael Samudio Molina was also ambushed in downtown Bogota. At that time the M-19 claimed responsibility for the attack. Earlier, another urban guerrilla attack was launched against the Defense Ministry when a powerful bomb was planted under the Defense Ministry garage and the minister's office. The bomb exploded, causing much material damage but no casualties. The Communard Insurgency [Insurgencia Comunera] urban guerrilla group claimed responsibility for that attack.

The third direct attack against the head of the Defense Ministry, General Manuel Jaime Guerrero Paz, was carried out on 22 November.

Paraguay

Police, Army Troops Prevent Concepcion 'March'

PY2411141988 Asuncion HOY in Spanish 24 Nov 88 p 10

[Text] Early yesterday morning, police and Army troops took control of the city of Concepcion, forbidding any traffic along the main streets (Agustin Fernando de Pinedo Avenue and President Franco Street) and closing stores along President Franco Street.

Schools did not have full attendance, primarily because the students were afraid of going into the streets. Heavily armed police and military patrols were deployed at each corner of the city, especially in the vicinity of the cathedral and the bishopric, the Salesian School, the Santa Teresita School, and the San Jose Institute, all of which are run by the Catholic Church.

The phone lines of these Catholic institutions had been cut and were still out at press time. The local radio stations played music and frequently read the resolutions issued by the 4th Infantry Division and the Interior Ministry regional office, which banned the scheduled march and traffic along the streets. The highways to the city were closed by cordons of joint police-military forces, who sent back any approaching vehicle. Bus passengers were forced to reach the city on foot after identifying themselves and after strict luggage control procedures.

HOY reporters had to return from the Concepcion airport aboard a single-engine plane on orders from the police and military troops. In the afternoon, however, HOY was able to contact sources in Concepcion.

The "March of Silence" which was scheduled for 1900 was not held. It was decided, as an alternative, to hold a rally at the Don Bosco Salesian schoolyard, where the march was to have begun. This rally could not be held because the joint forces dispersed all people approaching the school.

At the scheduled hour, Msgr Maricevich and some priests and nuns arrived at the school and celebrated mass despite the absence of people. Sources said over the phone that some 2,000 persons were prudently waiting some distance from the school.

Loreto parish priest Otilio Pinanez called for a march of silence in his parish this evening.

Nine persons were reported arrested yesterday afternoon. Among them are notary public Luciano Gutierrez, businessman Juan Manuel Fretes, and Favio Miskinich, who lives in the Concepcion bishopric building.

A woman who took pictures of the church in the morning caused a reaction and confrontation between the forces of order and civilians. The woman sought shelter at the bishopric building and thus saved her camera.

There were crowds along Fernando de Pinedo, Humaita, and Herminion Mendoza Streets. The joint military-police action was directed by General Juan Garvet.

Government Notice Published

PY2411151888 Asuncion HOY in Spanish 24 Nov 88 p 10

[Quotation marks as published]

[Text] The government's delegate office in Concepcion has issued the following communique to the people of Concepcion:

"Concepcion, 22 November 1988. Communique of the government delegate's office in Concepcion. In keeping with its rights and aware of a so-called 'March of Silence,' sponsored by the local Laymen Committee to repudiate a political rally held in this city on 12 November 1988, a march scheduled for tomorrow, Wednesday, at 1900 in this city, the government delegate's office in Concepcion hereby informs the public of the following:

"1—A so-called "March of Silence," scheduled for tomorrow, Wendesday, 23 November at 1900, is hereby strictly forbidden for reasons of public order.

"2—The sponsors of this act will be responsible for the implementation of this resolution.

"3—Those who fail to observe this communique will be subject to appropriate legal penalties and will be detained and placed at the disposal of a judge having jurisdiction.

"4—Disseminate through the media and file in the archives."

[Signed] Dr Gregorio Ramon Morales, government delegate.

Military Communique Issued

PY2411153988 Asuncion HOY in Spanish
24 Nov 88 p 10

[Quotation marks as published]

[Text] Following is the text of a communique released yesterday morning by the 4th Infantry Division, headquartered in the city of Concepcion:

"Concerning a so-called March of Silence, organized by the local Laymen Committee to repudiate a political rally held in this city on 12 November 1988, a march that has been scheduled for today, Wednesday, 23 November, at 1900, the commander of the 4th Infantry Division, headquartered in the city of Concepcion, states the following:

"1—In keeping with its duty to maintain normalcy and internal order in its zone, the 4th Infantry Division will support with its forces the action of police forces, the guardians of public order, to prevent the aforesaid march from being held.

"2—The 4th Infantry Division commander appeals to the good sense of the people, that they not participate in the announced March of Silence, under penalty of suffering the consequences usually caused by this type of act, which is an outrage to the law and the established order.

"3—The 4th Infantry Division commander recommends that parents of lyceum, school, and high school students not send their children to participate in the aforesaid march, in order to prevent them from running absolutely unnecessary and unjustified risks.

"4—Disseminate and file in the archives.

[Signed] General Juan Carvet, 4th Infantry Division commander.

Bishop Criticizes 'Takeover'

PY2411160688 Asuncion HOY in Spanish
24 Nov 88 p 10

[Text] In response to questions from an Asuncion radio station about the takeover of Concepcion by military and police forces, Concepcion Bishop Msgr Anibal Maricevich said yesterday afternoon that "they have surrounded us as if we were criminals or guerrillas. The attitude of the forces of order is insulting."

He added, "I do not understand anything, so I cannot say anything about it."

[Question] The presence of the Armed Forces in Concepcion has caused surprise in Asuncion.

[Maricevich] Right, the Armed Forces, the 4th Infantry Division and the police are here.... There are also strange people, people who are totally strange and who must have come from Asuncion.

[Question] You mean the policemen?

[Maricevich] Yes, uniformed police and also numerous plainclothes personnel. It looks as if we were in the time of the war against Bolivia, when the Paraguayan people were armed. Look, our attitude is totally peaceful and calm. I am surprised by the Interior Ministry office decree, which is really unfriendly. We could have discussed the subject, but the authorities made neither a friendly nor a Christian gesture toward the authorities of the church.

[Question] Do you think that there has been no smooth dialogue with the authorities?

[Maricevich] In fact there has been a dialogue, which I have maintained through considerable effort. The Interior Ministry delegate knows that I usually go to his office. General Garvet knows that I usually visit his headquarters. They know that I visited them on many occasions, and now they treat us as if we were enemies. They surround us as if we were subversives, guerrillas, or criminals. This is an insult. It is unfriendly to surround the bishopric building as if it were a den of criminals or something like that. Well, this is what my conscience tells me.

Peru

'About 100' Shining Path Members Killed in Clash

PY2311235988 Madrid EFE in Spanish 2258 GMT
23 Nov 88

[Text] Lima, 23 Nov (EFE)—Local radio stations reported today that about 100 Shining Path members and at least 6 soldiers were killed in combat in the northeastern Peruvian jungle.

The sources did not give any details of the clash, and the Defense Ministry in Lima indicated that it would not provide any information on the matter.

The radio stations reported that a considerable number of soldiers were wounded and that rescue operations were being conducted in the midst of torrential rains.

The report did not give the date or location of the combat but hinted that it took place in the Amazon region of Alto Huallaga, San Martin Department, located about 1,200 km northeast of Lima.

Coca is produced in that region on a large scale. Therefore, there is a considerable number of drug traffickers and Shining Path and MRTA militants operating there.

Garcia May Visit Site

PY2411134188 Madrid EFE in Spanish 0416 GMT 24 Nov 88

[Text] Lima, 23 Nov (EFE)—According to sources at the Tingo Maria Hospital, where the bodies were taken, a total of 16 military men died in a clash with Shining Path guerrillas in Peru's northeastern jungle area.

The armed clash occurred during the afternoon of 23 November somewhere in Aucayacu Region, northeast of Lima, according to reports received by local sources.

According to these reports, up to 40 members of the Peruvian Army and just over 100 guerrillas may have died in the clash. Others sources report that 300 guerrillas died in the fight.

The sources have also indicated that the Shining Path guerrillas were well armed, with different types of weapons than they have used until now. All the weapons that they used reportedly came from thefts from the security forces and the Armed Forces.

Peruvian President Alan Garcia met with Defense Minister General Enrique Lopez-Albujar, and it has been reported that the chief of state will probably travel to the combat zone on 24 November.

Until now the worst clash between the Army and Shining Path guerrillas occurred at the beginning of July 1988 near Tingo Maria, when 13 military men were killed and 25 guerrillas died.

On 20 and 21 November there were 3 armed clashes in Peru's Andean region in which 7 military men and 25 Shining Path guerrillas died.

At least 216 persons died in November as a consequence of terrorist activities, which in the past 8 years have caused the death of 12,000 persons and damage amounting to $10 billion.

Pisco Deputy Prefect Killed by Masked Persons

PY2311154188 Lima Domestic Service in Spanish 1030 GMT 23 Nov 88

[Report by station correspondent in Pisco]

[Excerpt] Dear listeners, we regret to inform you that at approximately 0400 this morning, four masked individuals stabbed Pisco Deputy Prefect (Carlos Soto Sedice) to death.

The criminals perpetrated this condemnable murder on the second floor of Soto's house and threw the body down the stairs to the first floor.

Pisco residents, who are deeply moved, have strongly condemned this horrible crime.

Soto is the second outstanding APRA leader to be killed in Pisco. On 7 December 1987, Professor Carlos Medrano Vazquez, who won election by a landslide, was riddled with bullets.

The body of Soto has been taken to the Pisco central morgue. [passage omitted]

Venezuela

Reports of Armed Forces Unrest Dismissed

PA2411035188 Caracas Venezolana de Television Canal 8 in Spanish 0000 GMT 23 Nov 88

[Report by Martin Pacheco on statements made by President Jaime Lusinchi; German Rodriguez Citraro, general director of military intelligence; and Eliodoro Guerrero Gomez, defense minister, at the Valencia Barracks on the occasion of the president's Christmas and New Year address, on 22 November—passages within quotation marks recorded]

[Excerpt] Earlier today, President Jaime Lusinchi came to Carabobo accompanied by Defense Minister Eliodoro Guerrero Gomez, other cabinet members, and top military leaders.

He received the relevant military honors at the (Paramacay Fort) and was presented with gifts by civilian and military personnel of the armored brigade.

In the first part of his address, the president talked about the support given to the Armed Forces during his administration and added that he is leaving behind very important development programs that should be continued by the next administration.

Lusinchi talked about the latest national events and emphasized that military men are today more than ever working as one person to defend sovereignty, integrity, and democracy. We are saddened and disturbed by the statements made during the last few days. In any case, Lusinchi said, you are the defenders of the fatherland

and a national resource. He also discussed the situation of the last few days and said the Armed Forces are ready to abide by law and by military regulations. In this regard, he said, we cannot blame a group for the conduct of an individual. Of course, we cannot accept distortion and manipulation.

[Lusinchi] "Therefore, there are no rumors or discontent in the Armed Forces. That is a lie, and I say it here. I say it loud and clear so it can be well understood all over the nation. I would also like to request—because it cannot be a simple command—respect for the Armed Forces. They should not be used for electoral campaign purposes. I also request that the Armed Forces be left out of the debate because it is not good for them or for the country; and, of course, lies never yield dividends."

After his address, Lusinchi was questioned by reporters about the incident that is filling the front pages of today's newspapers; namely, the asylum request made to the Mexican Embassy by Wilmer Gregorio Pinilla and Jose Augusto Arias, the two survivors of El Amparo.

[Lusinchi] "In matters of asylum, we respect international conventions; therefore we will wait for the Mexican Embassy's decision. In any case, this matter has been going around in circles. Those gentlemen are not in danger in Venezuela. They were taken everywhere with complete freedom."

Meanwhile, Vice-Admiral German Rodriguez Citraro, head of the General Directorate of Military Intelligence, said he has not resigned nor been dismissed, thereby denying reports from a Caracas newspaper that he had resigned following a disagreement over the El Amparo investigations.

[Rodriguez] "That is completely false. First, military men do not act in such a way—we obey. I cannot be going around resigning. I am appointed to a specific post and, when it is deemed appropriate, dismissed. It is completely false that I have put my post at the government's disposal, nor has my replacement been appointed.

[Reporter] No one has asked you to resign?

[Rodriguez] Absolutely not. That is completely false."

Finally, Defense Minister Eliodoro Guerrero wanted to make it clear that the Armed Forces are doing nothing out of the ordinary.

[Guerrero] "I understand, as defense minister, that in this electoral campaign certain things are said with the wrong intentions, and which may be exploited in different ways. The Armed Forces have the respect of the entire Venezuelan people and they have the respect of all institutions. We are honest, hardworking, and persevering, as we have been all our lives and will continue to be. There is no unrest in the institution and we will continue to guarantee the country's sovereignty." [passage omitted]

Wanted Venezuelans 'Guests' at Mexican Embassy
FL2211213588 Mexico City NOTIMEX in Spanish 1926 GMT 22 Nov 88

[By correspondent Rodolfo Rivera]

[Text] Caracas, 22 Nov (NOTIMEX)—Venezuelans Wilmer Pinilla and Jose Augusto Arias, the only survivors of a military action which claimed the lives of 14 people at the Amparo Township, Apure State, on 29 October, have been guests at the Mexican Embassy in Caracas since last night. There is a warrant for their arrest for military rebellion.

Mexican Ambassador to Venezuela Roberto de Rosenzweig Diaz told NOTIMEX this morning that these individuals, who arrived in the official residence Monday at 2200 accompanied by Venezuelan Deputy Walter Marquez, had not asked for political asylum. The diplomat, who asked that this not be reported sooner to avoid confusion, noted that he advised the Venezuelan Foreign Ministry from the time it was decided to declare them guests.

For his part, socialist Legislator Tachirense Marquez asserted during a news conference that Pinilla and Arias asked the ambassador for political asylum [as received] because asylum has been institutionalized in Mexico. This has been shown in the past when thousands of citizens from other countries, especially from Latin American, have found understanding and help in Mexico.

The Venezuelan Foreign Ministry, headed by German Nava Carrillo, who is in New York, declined to comment on the matter this morning. The ministry reported that it is up to the Mexican Government to grant political asylum to the alleged guerrilla fighters.

Pinilla and Arias survived a military action which has been locally called the massacre of Amparo. After they were interrogated by a civilian judge, as victims and not as suspects, they were supposed to appear on Monday before a military tribunal, which ordered their arrest and charged them with military rebellion.

Parliamentarian Marquez assured at the Congress offices this morning that the Mexican ambassador asked for documents—that is, certified copies of the arrest warrant issued by the military tribunal—and newspaper clips in which the survivors stated they feared for their life, so that political asylum status can be considered.

The socialist deputy asserted that the decision to ask for asylum had been made by the defendants after last Saturday because of the overwhelming burden put on them after the Venezuelan president himself gave his version of the events, declaring them guilty.

He claimed there are no guarantees for personal or procedural safety for their proteges from the moment it was reported that a military commando had riddled 14 peasants and fishermen traveling along the Arauca River.

He added that Pinilla and Arias are persecuted politically because a trial for military rebellion is eminently political, especially since in order to characterize it this way there has to be a military structure and a specific war action with weapons similar to those used by the military, which was not the case in the 20 October events.

Marquez was very clear during the news conference that Ambassador de Rosenzweig Diaz has not given an opinion regarding the request made by his proteges and said he will ask that the trial be held at the Caracas court martial and not at the military tribunal in the Tachira State.

After asserting that they would have come forward if there had been enough guarantees, he noted that the military judge and the government turned themselves into political persecutors. He expressed confidence in the Mexican Embassy because of its track record and its traditional honorable position regarding political asylum.

The legislator noted that evidence that Pinilla and Arias are not guerrilla fighters is the fact that immediately after the incident they sought the protection of the Amparo police commander instead of fleeing to Colombia, which is close by. He added that turning themselves in yesterday would have admitted their guilt and that going to the Mexican Embassy shows they are innocent.

He said Venezuelan parliamentarians, members of an investigation commission, and the people have confirmed that the dead and survivors are innocent of the crimes of which they have been accused.

He added that they may go to an international court, such as that of the UN Human Rights, to seek the justice the Venezuelan state denies them. He was sure that, according to local media reports, the Military Intelligence Directorate (DIM) is convinced that they are innocent to the extent that its director submitted his resignation.

This statement was, however, refuted by the Defense Ministry, which reported that the DIM director is firm in his post.

General Humberto Camejo, commander of the Jose Antonio Paez Commando, which participated in the Amparo events, was interrogated for 7 hours by the Congress' investigative commission. He said the dead and survivors are guilty of the crimes they were charged with and that they attacked the soldiers.